

Message Text

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72

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3274

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJECT: BUDGET DEBATE.

REF : OTTAWA 1065

1. FINMIN TURNER ANNOUNCED TODAY, APRIL 23, THAT HE WOULD PRESENT BUDGET EVENING OF MAY 6. BUDGET DEBATE CONTINUES FOR SIX DAYS THEREAFTER, OR THROUGH MAY 14, BUT OPPOSITION WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO OFFER AND VOTE ON NON-CONFIDENCE AMENDMENTS DURING DEBATE. IF GOVERNMENT IS DEFEATED DURING OR AT THE END OF BUDGET DEBATE, ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD MONDAY, JULY 8 OR 15.

2. AT THIS READING, IT IS PROBABLY BETTER THAN EVEN CHANGE THAT GOVERNMENT WILL BE DEFEATED OVER BUDGET OR WILL SEEK ELECTIONS WITHOUT ONUS OF HAVING BEEN DEFEATED. AS IT HAS FOR PAST YEAR OR MORE, DECISION ON LONGECITY OF LIBERAL GOVERNMENT COULD REST WITH 31 MEMBERS OF NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP) CAUCUS IN COMMONS. SINCE DESPATCH REFTEL NDP SPOKESMAN HAVE BEEN MAKING INCREASINGLY THREATENING STATEMENTS, BUT IN EACH EVENT STOPPING SHORT OF FLAT COMMITMENT TO JOIN CONSERVATIVES IN VOTING TRUDEAU ADMINISTRATION OUT. NDP LEADER LEWIS HAS SAID HE MIGHT BE PROVISIONALLY PREPARED TO SUPPORT MINORITY CONSERVATIVE

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GOVERNMENT, AND REPEATED THAT NDP DIFFERENCES WITH LIBERALS

WERE "IRRECONCILABLE." HOWEVER, HE ALSO REPEATED LIST OF NDP DEMANDS, LEAVING QUESTION OF HOW NDP WOULD VOTE IF BUDGET MET SOME OR MOST OF NDP CRITERIA. EMBASSY HAS CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT NDP CAUCUS VOTED APRIL 4 TO WITHDRAW SUPPORT FROM GOVERNMENT, BUT THERE ARE MANY RUMORS TO EFFECT THAT NDP MEMBERS NOW GETTING COLD FEET.

3. MEANWHILE, COMMONS IS DEBATING LEGISLATION TO KEEP WORLD FOOTBALL LEAGUE OUT OF TORONTO, WHICH MAY BE DEFEATED OR PUT OFF WITHOUT VOTE. TORIES ARE PROLONGING FOOTBALL ISSUE TO STRESS GOVERNMENT FRIVILITY AND REFUSAL TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO DEAL WITH INFLATION. TRUDEAU RETURNED APRIL 18 FROM POLITICALLY INEXPLICABLE CARIBBEAN VACATION, TANNED AND OBVIOUSLY BORED WITH TUMULTUOUS COMMONS. TRUDEAU IS REPORTED TELLING PRESS HE DOES NOT BELIEVE CANADIAN PUBLIC WANTS ELECTIONS. BUT THERE ARE INCREASING SIGNS THAT HOUSE OF COMMONS DOES.
PORTER

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